

REMARKS

Claims 2-25 and 27-30 are now pending in the above-referenced patent application. Applicants respectfully request further consideration of these claims, in view of the amendments set forth above and the following remarks.

Canceled Claim

Claim 1 has been canceled, without prejudice, to advance the prosecution of the instant application.

Amended Claims

Claims 2, 4-13, 18-20, 22-25 and 27 have been amended, without prejudice, to advance the prosecution of the instant case and put the application in condition for allowance. Specifically, these claims have been amended as to claim dependency, to depend directly or indirectly from one or more of (allowed) independent claims 3, 14-17 or 21. No new matter has been added.

Acknowledgement

The Office action indicates that independent claims 3, 14-17 and 21 are allowed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) (Carlson, Gimezewski, Johnson, Kulkova, Schodel or Temkin)

The Office action rejects claims 1, 2 (as depending from claim 30), 4-13, 18-20, 22-25, and 27-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Carlson in view of Gimezewski, Johnson, Kulkova, Schodel or Temkin. (See paragraph 3 at pages 2-5 of the Office action; see also paragraph 6 at pages 5-6 of the Office action).

This rejection has been obviated by the instant amendment to the claims, in which claim 1 has been canceled, and each of claims 2, 4-13, 18-20, 22-25 and 27-30 have been amended to depend from one or more of (allowed) independent claims 3, 14-17 or 21.

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PATENTEquivalents

The amendments to the claims and the arguments presented in response to the Office action have been made to claim subject matter which the Applicants regard as their invention. By such amendments, the Applicants in no way intend to surrender any range of equivalents beyond that which is needed to patentably distinguish the claimed invention as a whole over the prior art. Applicants expressly reserve patent coverage to all such equivalents that may fall in the range between applicants literal claim recitations and those combinations that would have been obvious in view of the prior art.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge the fees required in connection with this Amendment E to Deposit Account No. 50-0496, in accordance with the Transmittal submitted herewith. The Examiner is also authorized to debit any other fees required in connection with this application, or to credit any overpayment of fees in connection with this application to Deposit Account No. 50-0496.

Respectfully submitted,



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